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CITY OF WELLS

URBAN SANITARY AUTHORITY

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR

1959



To: The Urban Sanitary Authority of the City of Wells

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting my Annual Report on the health of the Borough during 1959.

GENERAL

The area of the City is 1336.00 acres.

The Register General's Estimate of the Mid-year resident population of Wells in 1959 was 6,420 (6,260).

The number of inhabited houses in the City at the end of 1959 was 2111.

The Rateable Value at 31st March 1959 was £93,409.

The sum represented by the penny rate at the end of 1959 was estimated at £376.

BIRTH RATE

The total live births in the City in 1959 was 84 (99) as follows:-

Legitimate	83	Males:	39	Females:	44
Illegitimate	1	Males:	1	Females:	nil

Still births: There was 1 still birth during 1959 as follows:-

Legitimate	1	Males:	nil	Females:	1
Illegitimate	nil	Males:	nil	Females:	nil

The birthrate per thousand of the population was 13.0 (15.8).

The still birth rate per thousand live and still births was 11.9.

N.B. Figures in brackets are corresponding figures for 1958.

DEATH RATE

There were 119 (115) deaths in the City from all causes during 1959, 47 (59) males and 72 (56) females.

There were no deaths from Puerperal Sepsis or other puerperal causes.

There were 8 (10) deaths from cancer 3 Males and 5 Females.

There were 28 (23) deaths from heart diseases 10 Males and 18 Females.

The death rate per thousand of the population was 18.5 (18.4)

INFANT MORTALITY

1. Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age:-

Legitimate 1 Males 1 Female nil

The infant mortality rate per 1000 live births was 11.9.

The legitimate infant mortality rate per 1000 live births was 12.0.

The illegitimate infant mortality rate per 1000 live births was nil

2. Deaths of infants under 4 weeks of age:-

Legitimate 1 Males 1 Female nil

The Neo-Natal Mortality rate (deaths under 1 week/1000 total live births) was 11.9.

3. Deaths of Infants under 1 week of age:-

Legitimate 1 Male 1 Female nil

Early Neo-natal Mortality rate (deaths under 1 week per 1000 total live births) was 11.9.

4. Perinatal Mortality rate (still births and deaths under 1 week combined per 1000 total live and still births) was 23.5.

MATERNAL MORTALITY

Maternal Mortality (including abortion).
Number of deaths nil.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Notifications were:-

Whooping Cough	2
Scarlet Fever	nil
Measles	88
Erysipelis	nil
Acute Polio-myelitis	nil
Food Poisoning	nil
Puerperal Pyrexia	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	nil
Others	nil

There were no deaths from Infectious Diseases.

TUBERCULOSIS

At the beginning of the year the number of cases on my register was 46 as follows:-

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Pulmonary	25	21
Non Pulmonary	<u>nil</u>	<u>nil</u>
	25	21

During the year 17 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were notified, 9 males and 8 females. During the year 5 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis, 1 male and 4 female were removed from the register.

So that at the end of the year the number of cases on the register was as follows:-

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Pulmonary	33	25
Non Pulmonary	<u>nil</u>	<u>nil</u>
	33	25

A large number of mild and early cases were detected by massXray, and this accounts for the unusual increase in notifications.

WATER SUPPLY

Quantity.

The total daily consumption of water in the City was on average 250,400 gallons. This consumption represents 40 gallons per head per day.

Sources.

- (a) Public. The main source of supply of the City water is from the Holes Ash and Vigo Spring areas on the southern slopes of the Mendip Hills and from two boreholes situated at the Athletic Ground.
- (b) Private. There are also three private borehole supplies and the water supplied by these is mainly used for industrial purposes.

The Tudway Estates have a water supply which is piped to a small number of houses in the City and also supplied the Cathedral Grammar School. This supply, derived from a spring on the Mendip Hills, is fed to a reservoir at Walcombe and thence for distribution.

WATER SUPPLY

Chemical and Bacteriological Examination.

Details of typical results of chemical examinations were as follows:-

	All results in parts per million.	
	Holes Ash Spring	Borehole
Physical Characters	Clear & bright	Clear & bright
Reaction	Very slightly alkaline p.h. 7.3	Very slightly alkaline p.h. 7.3
Total Solids	180.0	480.0
Alkalinity (as Ca Co ₃)	140.0	310.0
Total Hardness	145.0	310.0
(a) Permanent	nil	30.0
(b) Temporary	145.0	280.0
Chlorides	12.0	20.0
Ammonia	0.004	0.002
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.012	0.016
Nitrates	Trace	1.4
Nitrites	nil	nil
Oxygen absorbed in 4 hrs. at 80°F	nil	0.05
Free Carbon Dioxide	4.0	7.5
Sediment	none	none

Hardness.

The water from the Spring supplies is slightly hard and all temporary. The Borehole water is a very hard water and mainly temporary.

Samples.

The results below were of samples of water taken from the public and private supplies:-

<u>Raw Water.</u>				<u>After Treatment.</u>			
Bacteriological.		Chemical.		Bacteriological.		Chemical.	
Sat.	Unsat.	Sat.	Unsat.	Sat.	Unsat.	Sat.	Unsat.
3	2	2	nil	12	1	nil	nil

The unsatisfactory samples taken from the raw water piped supplies were all from the Tudway Estates private supply. An investigation revealed that the small chlorination plant which serves the supply required regulating and adjustment. Further samples were found to be satisfactory.

Piped Supplies.

Most of the houses in the City have an internal piped supply. There are still a comparatively large number of houses, estimated at 200, which obtain their supplies from taps situated externally and usually at the rear of the premises. In many cases this supply point is shared by two or more houses. The majority of these houses are in the Councils Slum Clearance programme.

Mains Extension.

Water main extensions during the year are as follows:-

Council Estates.

Broad Close	160 yds. of 4" main.
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Private Development.

Bath Road Estate	300 yds. of 4" main.
Millers Gardens	50 yds. of 4" main.
Wookey Hole Road	285 yds. of 4" main.
Bath Road & Wookey Hole Road	150 yds. of 1½" main.

Rainfall.

The rainfall figure for 1959 was 28.47 inches. Previous years rainfall figures were as follows:-


1955	25.94 inches
1956	23.62 inches
1957	31.15 inches
1958	34.92 inches

PUBLIC SWIMMING BATHS

Samples of water are taken from the open air Public Swimming Baths at Princes Road during the summer season. The samples are taken from the inlet or shallow end and from the outlet or deep end. Samples are also taken from the childrens Paddling Pool.

Water for the baths is taken from the mains supply and passes through a continuous pressure sand filter and is chlorinated. The turnover of the water in the baths takes place every 4 hours.

The daily average number of bathers during the season was 354.



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Samples.

Eleven samples were taken from the swimming pool and three samples from the paddling pool:-

	Satisfactory.	Unsatisfactory.
Swimming Pool	11	nil
Paddling Pool	3	nil

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

Methods of Dispos l.

Most of the houses and premises in the City are served by main sewer. There are isolated pockets of houses whose only method of disposal is by the septic tank and soakaway system or by conservancy.

In particular there are 10 houses on Wookey Hole Road at the edge of the district which use the septic tank method of disposal. Due to the clayey nature of the ground, and the height above road level, the soakaways can cause nuisance especially in the summer months. Arrangements are in hand to provide a sewer in the roadway for the use of these houses.

There are approximately 40 other houses using septic tank disposal methods mostly at the boundaries of the district and they are, for the most part, isolated from the main urban area. They do not create a nuisance but again, due to the clay subsoil there is a tendency for ponding to take place on the soakaway areas, especially during periods of heavy rainfall.

Sewage Disposal Works.

The new Sewage Disposal Works was completed during the year and the whole of the sewage of the City came under treatment at these works.

Sewer Extensions.

Sewer extensions during the year were as follows:-

Welsford Housing Site	500 yds. of 6" sewer.
Welsford Housing Site	70 yds. of 4" sewer.

REFUSE COLLECTION

A weekly combined refuse and salvage collection is carried out in the City. Trade refuse is removed on payment.

Disposal of household and trade refuse is by semi controlled tipping on the sites adjacent to the Sewage Disposal Works and would be much improved if a full system of controlled tipping were adopted. The lack of covering material and insufficient labour force are the main reasons which prevent this at present.

HOUSING

Housing Programme.

During the year 11 out of 16 houses at Millers Gardens were completed. These houses are intended to rehouse persons displaced from houses demolished under the Councils Slum Clearance Scheme.

At Chamberlain Street a block of 6 flats were commenced during the year, and these are also required for persons rehoused under Slum Clearance Schemes.

The development of 10 houses at Broad Close was commenced in the year, and these houses are intended for letting at economic rentals.

Houses Erected.

	Houses erected during 1959.		Houses in course of construction.	
	Slum Clearance.	Other Purposes.	Slum Clearance.	Other Purposes.
Local Authority	11	nil	11	10
Private Enterprise	-	57	-	43
Total	11	57	11	53

Total number of post war houses completed:-

By Local Authority	300
By Private Enterprise	<u>260</u>
Total	<u>560</u>

Housing Applications.

The total number of applications for tenancy of a Council House at the end of the year was 223.

Overcrowding.

Two cases of overcrowding were reported in 1959.

IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

The Council has always operated the Improvement Grant scheme, and there has been a slow but steadily increasing number of applicants for grant aid towards the improvement of houses. This increased interest is due in part to increased publicity, and also since the duty of approving grants was taken from the Regional Offices of the Ministry of Housing & Local Government, and given to local authorities, the procedure has become less cumbersome.

Improvement Grants contd.

In June the House Purchase & Housing Act 1959 came into operation and introduced grants towards providing five basic amenities in houses. These amenities are, bath, washhandbasin, hot water supply, food store and internal W.C. This type of grant is known as the "Standard Grant". The more elaborate grant system which is still in operation is now known as the "Discretionary Grant" and gives local authorities more discretion in approval or refusal.

The number of applications for grants from owner/occupiers heavily outweigh applications from landlords.

Discretionary Grants.

Number of applications and houses dealt with during the year:-

Received		Approved	
Applications	No. of houses	Applications	No. of houses
11	11	11	11

Number of applications approved in respect of owner/occupiers = 11.

Average cost per dwelling approved £440

Average amount of grant per dwelling £194

Total amount of grant payments by local authority £2133

Number of applications approved since commencement of grant scheme in 1954 = 40.

Standard Grants.

Number of applications received 6

Number of applications approved 6

Number of applications from owner/occupier (approved) 5

Number of applications from landlords (approved) 1

Total amount of grants payable £483

Average cost per dwelling approved £80.10.0.

Types of amenities provided:-

Baths	4
Washhandbasins	4
Hot water supplies	6
W.C's (internal)	3
Food stores	1

SLUM CLEARANCE AND UNFIT HOUSES

During 1959 detailed inspections were made for Slum Clearance purposes of 24 houses at Tucker Street, but no further action was taken on this area.

Demolition has not yet taken place of the 15 houses at Priest Row and Chamberlain Street which were declared a Clearance Area in 1958. Arrangements for purchasing the properties by agreement are in hand, and construction of houses and flats to accommodate the occupants is proceeding.

Houses Demolished.

(a) Houses demolished in Clearance Areas	9
(b) Houses demolished not in Clearance Areas and as a result of procedure under Section 17(1) of the Housing Act 1957.	7

Unfit Houses Closed.

(a) Under Sections 16, 17 and 35 of the Housing Act 1957	Nil
(b) Parts of building's closed under Section 18 of the Housing Act 1957	Nil
(c) By informal procedure	Nil

Unfit Houses made fit and in which defects were remedied.

(a) After informal action by Local Authority	62
(b) After formal notice under Public Health or Housing Acts.	1

Unfit Houses in Temporary Use.

(Housing Act 1957)	Nil
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Purchase of Houses by Agreement.

Houses in Clearance Areas purchased in the year	Nil
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HOUSING INSPECTIONS

1.(a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (Under Public Health or Housing Acts)	102
(b) Number of inspections for the purpose	138
2.(a) Number of dwelling houses (included under sub. heading 1(a) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidation Regs. 1925-1932.	27
(b) Number of inspections made for purpose	27
(c) Number of houses in which no action was found necessary	35

Housing Inspections contd.

3.	Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous and injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	22
4.	Number of dwelling houses (including those referred to under preceeding sub heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	67

Action Under Statutory Powers.

Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 12 of the Housing Act 1957	Nil
Proceedings under Public Health Acts	Nil
Proceedings under Section 18 of the Housing Act 1957	Nil

FOOD INSPECTION

The quantity of food condemned as unfit for human consumption during the year amounted to 463 lbs. This quantity is comparatively small.

Visits to food premises resulted in the following quantities of food being disposed of as unfit for human consumption:-

	lbs.
Sausage Meat	16
Fish	70
Prunes	7
Cooked Meats	<u>14</u>
	<u>107 lbs.</u>

Canned Goods.

Apricot Pulp	40
Corned Beef	300
Cooked Ham	<u>16</u>
	<u>356 lbs.</u>

The large quantity of Corned Beef results from routine inspections at the Cold Store Depot at Rowdens Road.

FOOD PREMISES

The total number of food businesses within the City is 142. These are separated into the following types:-

Butchers Shops	8	Grocers Shops	16
Chemists & Druggists	3	Cafe	14
Confectionery Shops	5	Licensed Premises	17
Greengrocers Shops	6	Snack Bars	2
Fish Shops	2	Bakehouses	4
Fish & Chip Shops	2	School Kitchens &	
Sweet Shops	20	Dining Centres	5
General Shops	3	Hotels	7
Cold Stores	1	Guest Houses	20
Mobile Shops	1	Food Manufacturing	
Canteens	5	Premises	1

Food Premises contd.

A total of 121 visits were paid to food premises in connection with work under the Councils Clean Food Byelaws and the Food Hygiene Regulations 1955.

During the year a considerable amount of improvement has been necessary to the food premises in the City. In a few cases there has been much opposition to carrying out improvements, due to the expense involved.

In all 5 premises have been completely reconstructed to meet the requirements of the Food Hygiene Regs. 1955. This has meant gutting the interior of the premises and in some cases almost rebuilding.

Improvements Effected.

Food Premises.

Complete Reconstructions	5
Extensions of inadequate premises	3
General sanitary conditions improved	13
Hot & cold water supplied	12
Additional W.C's provided	8
Sinks provided	5
Rooms redecorated	34
Rooms replastered	10
Clothes cupboards provided	4
Improved artificial lighting	6
Improved ventilation	2

Cafes, Restaurants.

Contraventions remedied	<u>12</u>
	<u>114</u>

MILK SUPPLIES

General.

(a) Total number of Dairy Farms	7
(b) Total number of Retailers	5
(c) Number of Producer/Retailers inc. in (b)	1
(d) Number of licensed pasteurisation plants	1
(e) Number of heat-treatment plants not included in (d)	Nil
(f) Number of Supplementary Licences issued to dealers or distributors	3

Specified Area.

Under the Milk (Special Design tions) (Specified Areas) (No.2.) Order 1957, which became operative on 1st December, 1957, the whole of the area became a Specified Area, allowing only the sale of designated milk within its boundaries. The milk sold in the area is either pasteurised or tuberculin tested.

MILK SAMPLING.

Designation	Samples Taken	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Tuberculin Tested	10	7	3
Accredited	-	-	-
Pasteurised	14	14	nil
Sterilised	-	-	-
Undesignated	-	-	-
Totals	24	21	3

The unsatisfactory Tuberculin Tested samples were taken from a raw milk supply and from the same retailer. They were isolated samples taken with approximately 3 monthly intervals, and a report to the farms gave improved results in each case.

Biological Sampling.

Number taken nil

ICE CREAM

Number of Premises Registered.

(a)	For manufacture only	nil
(b)	For retail only	21
(c)	For manufacture and retail	4

Sampling.

The total number of samples of Ice Cream taken during the year was 26.

The results were as follows:-

	<u>Hot Mix.</u>	<u>Cold Mix.</u>
Grade I	16	6
Grade II	3	-
Grade III	1	-
Grade IV	-	-
Totals	20	6

As the standard of manufacture and retailing of ice cream steadily improved, it has become necessary to take a lesser number of samples.

MEAT SUPERVISION

Number of Licensed Slaughterhouses in District 1
 Number of Licensed Knackers Yards in District nil

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned during the year:-

	Cattle	Sheep & Lambs.
Number killed	100	375
Number inspected	100	375
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis.</u>		
(a) Whole carcasses condemned	nil	nil
(b) Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	39	38
<u>Tuberculosis only.</u>		
(a) Whole carcasses condemned	nil	nil
(b) Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	1	nil
<u>Weight of Meat Condemned.</u> (in lbs.)		
(a) Tuberculosis	10	nil
(b) Other Diseases	293	130

No pigs, calves, cows or horses were killed in 1959.

Disposal of Condemned Food.

Disposal of condemned food is by burial at the Refuse Disposal Tip at Burcott Road, or by arrangement with knackers who operate a daily collection service from Bristol.

RIVER POLLUTION

Number of cases dealt with during the year Nil.

RODENT CONTROL

Sewer Maintenance Treatment.

Only one sewer maintenance test treatment was undertaken during the year.

There are 110 manholes on the sewer system of the City. Test Treatment of 18 manholes was undertaken and as the result was negative, further treatment was not necessary.

Surface Infestations.

The year was singularly free from serious rat infestation, and this was no doubt due to the clear condition of the sewers.

24 complaints of surface infestation were received and 11 separate treatments were carried out by the rodent operative. Warfarin was used as the poison for all treatments except in one instance where Zinc Phosphide was used.

Details are given below in the form required by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

	Local Authority	Dwelling Houses	Others including Business Premises	Agric.	Total
Number of Properties in Area.	12	1927	611	26	2576
Number of Properties inspected as a result of					
(a) Notification	-	22	2	-	24
(b) Survey	11	31	21	26	89
Infested Properties					
(a) Rats } Major	1	-	-	-	1
} Minor	-	6	3	-	9
(b) Mice } Major	-	-	-	-	-
} Minor	-	1	-	-	1

Notices served under the Act.

Nil

FACTORIES

The number of factories on the register at the end of the year was 53.

The number of inspections was 58, and included at least one visit to each factory. An abstract of the results of these inspections in the form required by the Ministry of Labour and National Service is set out below:-

Administration of the Factories Act 1937

Part I of the Act.

Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health.

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	1	1	nil	nil
(ii) Factories not in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	48	53	nil	nil
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers premises)	4	4	nil	nil
Total	53	58	-	-

Factories contd.

Cases in which defects were found.

Particulars (1)	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted (6)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	To H.M. Inspector (4)	To H.M. Inspector (5)	
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	4	4	-	-	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	3	3	-	2	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	1	1	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	-	-	-	-	-
Total	8	8	-	2	-

Part VIII of the Act.

Outwork.

Wearing apparel
(making)

Number of outworkers in August
list required by Section 10(i)(c) 2.

Alan W. Woolley. M.B. Ch.B.
Medical Officer of Health.

H. C. Birch. M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.,
Public Health Inspector.

